

# CREACT BLUEPRINT

A guide to support your activism journey



**PREPARED BY**

SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP KOSOVA AND CREAT PROGRAM PASTICIPANTS

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# ABOUT CREAT BLUEPRINT

This document is a collaborative work of CreAct program facilitators, experts, and participants. It was co-created through the active work of the participants during a 2-day workshop which was held on the 14th and 15th of May, 2021.

This activity is part of the CreAct program designed and implemented by Sustainability Leadership Kosova (SLK). This project was supported by the Community Development Fund (CDF) as part of their Human Rightivism Project with the Swedish Embassy In Prishtina as a donor.

Our mission was to create a unified voice and develop a guidebook to help future activists and provide them with tips on how to apply creative activism tactics. During the workshop participants were guided through a design challenge taking as a case study the problem of deforestation in Kosovo. The challenge question was “How might we increase the number of planted trees and lower the number of the trees being cut?”.

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**CreAct Facilitators:** Mentor Dida, Çlirim Sheremeti, Thomas Haselböck.



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# ACTIVISM JOURNEY

The Activism journey has three main phases:

**Internal action** - where you as an individual identify the problem you wish to change coming from an urge that comes from your intrinsic motivation. But in your journey to change the world for the better you need the support of others.

**External action** - where you bring others who share a similar desired state of affairs and join the cause. As a result of such action, the world changes for the better. Starting from a direct impact in the life of a specific community, or a **systems change creating** a new paradigm of how a social or environmental issue is perceived and supported.

Let us explore the first steps of your journey as an activist.





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# PHASE 1

## INTERNAL ACTION

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

Activism raises awareness about the desired change wished to be seen in the world. And we know that change is inevitable and constant, but it also requires a well-thought-out plan. Resistance to change is natural and ever-present. As an activist, the role is to use the skill of awareness-raising to influence change and help people identify the change they want to see in the world. All changes stem from an individual's will and courage to take action. And with the right tools, one person can shift the environment by bringing a whole community or influencing a global movement to actualize the change.

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# STEP 1

## COMMITTING

We live at times when many complex social and environmental issues are present. While globally we have addressed pressing issues such as extreme poverty, access to education, and have increased connection through the use of technology, we are dealing with a global pandemic, climate change, increasing inequalities, and environmental degradation.

Committing to solving complex issues is both daunting and motivating. It means that most of the actions we take as individuals are aimed at solving the issue we care for. As such, it is crucial that we take the time to acknowledge our commitment to an identified cause and honor it. Putting our effort and our goals in creating the desired change are rewarding but at times hard.

How do we decide to commit to a cause?

# STEP 2

## INTRINSIC MOTIVATION/ PURPOSE

As humans, we live and coexist with other humans, species, and nature around us. For some, it is important to save the bees, while for others to ensure that every woman is educated and has access to meaningful jobs. Our motivation to act on a specific issue comes from our own personal experiences and through our empathy towards others. Previous experiences shape our worldviews, while we are also influenced by the actions of others.

So how do we go about measuring our motivation to act upon the desired change?

**Tool:** Use this tool to measure your motivation to address the cause you wish to change. Select your answer by circling from 1 (somewhat important) to 5 (extremely important) for the 10 statements below:

1. This problem makes me very nervous.....1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
2. I often debate with family and friends about this problem.....1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
3. I have researched several similar cases in the world and I have ideas for solutions.....1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
4. I have discussed with friends about an activity that can help solve the problem..... 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
5. The idea that I could contribute as little as possible makes me very enthusiastic..... 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. I love working in this field.....1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
7. Even if this solution does not work, I will try another one.....1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
8. I do not worry at all about people trying to discourage me.....1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
9. I would work on solving this problem even if no one appreciates my work.....1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
10. I would work to solve this problem on a voluntary basis.....1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

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# STEP 2 CONT.

## INTRINSIC MOTIVATION/ PURPOSE

Calculate your score as follows:

**40-50** You are fully motivated to the cause, so consider yourself already invested.

**40-30** You are motivated to the cause and need further information to start acting.

**30-20** You are interested in the cause, consider identifying others who share the same interest and explore possible solutions together.

**20-under** You care about the issue at hand, consider identifying a champion who is already invested in the cause and explore ways of collaborating together.

This tool was adapted by Shprehia-e-Aktivizmit Report published by inpo-ks.org

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# STEP 3

## PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Defining a problem begins with the awareness that a problem exists or, more specifically, that there is a difference between the actual and desired state. Knowing and articulating the desired change and understanding the cause of the problem is essential for you as an activist. Problems in our society and environment are complex, with many contributing factors and with various solution paths, so as activists it is paramount to be very clear about what the problem really is before considering the solutions. We believe that change comes when we first fall in love with the problem because only then we understand it well enough to explore and consider the solutions that can address it.

There are several tools that can be used to guide your problem identification journey which is presented below:

**Tool:** Root Cause Analysis and Stakeholder Mapping

# STEP 3 CONT.

## PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION - TOOLS

**Root cause analysis** - 5 “Why” technique (sometimes known as 5Y). This is a simple but powerful tool to understand the root cause of a problem. We sometimes mistake a symptom of a problem as the cause of it. While it might put a 'band-aid' on the problem, it won't deal with the root cause. Use this link to learn more about how to use the tool. Use it on your own at first and then share it with other people that have joined your cause. So, that you explore deeper the root cause of the identified problem.

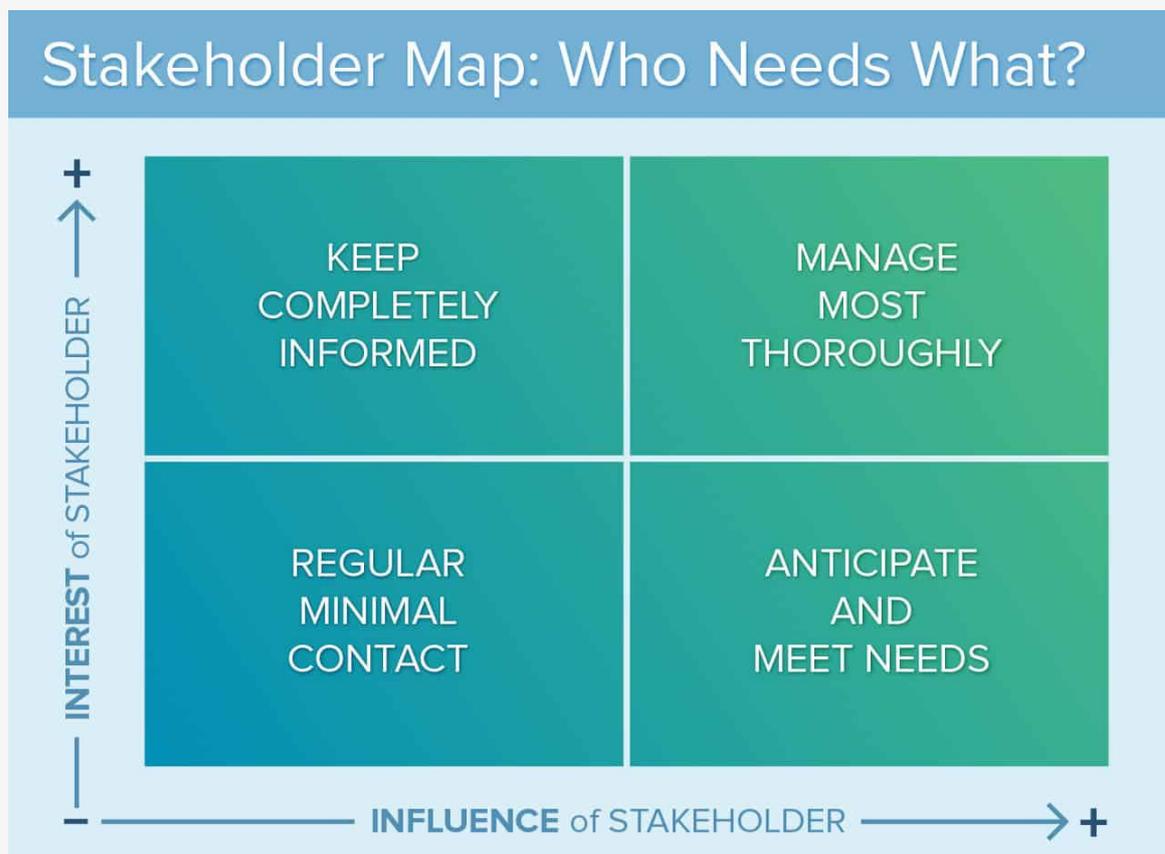
### The 5 Whys



# STEP 3 CONT.

## PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION - TOOLS

**Stakeholder Mapping** - Stakeholders are individuals or groups who have a stake in the problem. Either by supporting it or causing it. It is crucial to identify who the stakeholders are and what are their roles and input. Use the following tool to identify stakeholders and strategize ways of engaging them. Some will support your cause while others might diminish it. Therefore it's crucial to identify key stakeholders, assess their interests and needs, and clarify how these may affect your actions.



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# STEP 3 CONT.

## PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION - TOOLS

**Stakeholder Mapping** - From this analysis, you can make plans for how to engage the stakeholders to further your cause, as you would know what their goals and objectives are.

Once you identify the relevant stakeholders, proceed to map them using the following tool. This tool will help you to categorize based on their interest and power on the identified cause. Stakeholders can be a specific local community, government officials, donors, media, a private company, an NGO, or other activists. Each stakeholder represents their interests, power which could support or inhibit your cause. Once you plot them in the tool, you will have a better sense of how to keep them engaged, informed and identify the best tactics to utilize their power and influence in reaching your own goals.

Once you have identified the stakeholders, their power, and interest in the cause you are passionate about, it is time to learn from the most affected community members. Those who experience firsthand the social or environmental issue you aspire to change.

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# STEP 4

## TALK TO THE AFFECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS/INDIVIDUALS

Often, when we embark on solving a problem, we have our own perceptions and assumptions about a problem. While our judgment can be intact, it is crucial that we have a dialogue with the affected community members or individuals. There are many ways and channels of how we can engage with others. But, we now challenge you to put on your curiosity hat! Start talking to as many individuals as possible. These talks can be very helpful if you're looking for preliminary information on a particular topic or issue from the affected community members.

Visit the Feedback Lab's [website](#) in order to advance your feedback process.

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# STEP 4 CONT.

## TALK TO THE AFFECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS/INDIVIDUALS

### The ABC of engaging with the affected community members:

1. Define what you want to know, and who will be your targeted audience;
2. Consider the kinds of questions you want to ask- which can be both open-ended and closed-ended questions;
3. Draft your questions, and ask your peers to review them;
4. Determine whom you'd like to talk to (samples of community members, individuals, experts);
5. If you are embarking on this step as a group, ensure that you will all ask the same questions the same way in order to capture as much information as possible;
6. Contact the people you want to talk to, explain the purpose of your discussion;
7. Collect and analyze the information. It is important to share your findings with the individuals you talked with, through a sensemaking session, to ensure that you have a nuanced understanding of the results.

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# STEP 4 CONT.

## TALK TO THE AFFECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS/INDIVIDUALS

There are various ways of how you can translate the gathered information. If the data is quantitative in nature, consider using graphs and figures. Visualization helps a reader to quickly understand the information presented. If the interview was more geared towards qualitative data, consider writing a report with succinct information on the main findings. Carefully look to see any pattern in responses, and group them based on themes and frequency of occurrence.

**Checklist:** Did you talk with at least 10 community members who are affected by the issue?

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# STEP 5

## GATHER WIDER EVIDENCE

In order to identify a problem to work on, explore the solutions to the problem, and set realistic goals. It is absolutely necessary to have data and in-depth research about the identified problem. This allows for informed decision-making. Having data about an identified problem is the most persuasive argument. As such your ability to provide evidence-based arguments to advocate for change depends on finding the best available data, information or research.

What data can be used to best support your arguments? This depends on the identified problem! Sometimes having statistical data is enough, whereas sometimes it requires a deep research of laws, rules and regulations, scientific reports, industry wide reports, and key informant interviews. Such information provides a better understanding of the systems and structures in place pertaining to the identified problem you are tackling. Sometimes amending a law might be the only solution, whereas sometimes raising awareness might be the best way forward.

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# STEP 5 CONT.

## GATHER WIDER EVIDENCE

You can use the data to:

- Identify and influence policy action;
- Explore various possible solutions to a problem;
- Analyze achievable desired change through setting SMART goals;
- Identify primary contacts for collaboration;

**Tips** to consider:

- Access to data is not always possible, as it might not be public. Consider requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Check the applicable laws and regulations.
- Identify allies.

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# STEP 6

## SCOPE OF YOUR ACTION

Once you have a better understanding of the various factors that are contributing to the identified issue and have gathered enough information to guide your action, it is time to scope the action you want to take. Begin to draft a strategy, identify whom you want to target as key collaborators such as teachers, politicians, artists, NGOs, other activists, etc. You should also consider setting up a timeline of actions to be taken and have a high-level overview of the main activities that you plan to organize.

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# STEP 7

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

For any action to take traction, you need the support of other like-minded people. As such it is crucial to start identifying others who believe in a similar cause. There are many ways of how you can engage others as follows:

- Organize an outreach through social media - it is cost and time effective and allows you to spread the word faster;
- Consider using various media channels to target a wider audience;
- Set up the principles which will guide your collaboration. Consider writing a Memorandum of Agreement;
- Ensure that you all align with the values and the vision of your action.

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# STEP 8

## CO-CREATION

Once you created the team of collaborators, it is time to set up the roles and tasks for each member. Through a series of brainstorming sessions and utilizing various tools that will help you align the actions and goals of your initiative, you will embark on your activism journey. It is during this step that you will create a concrete plan of action.

## TOOLS

**Miro Board** - an interactive online tool for brainstorming as a group.

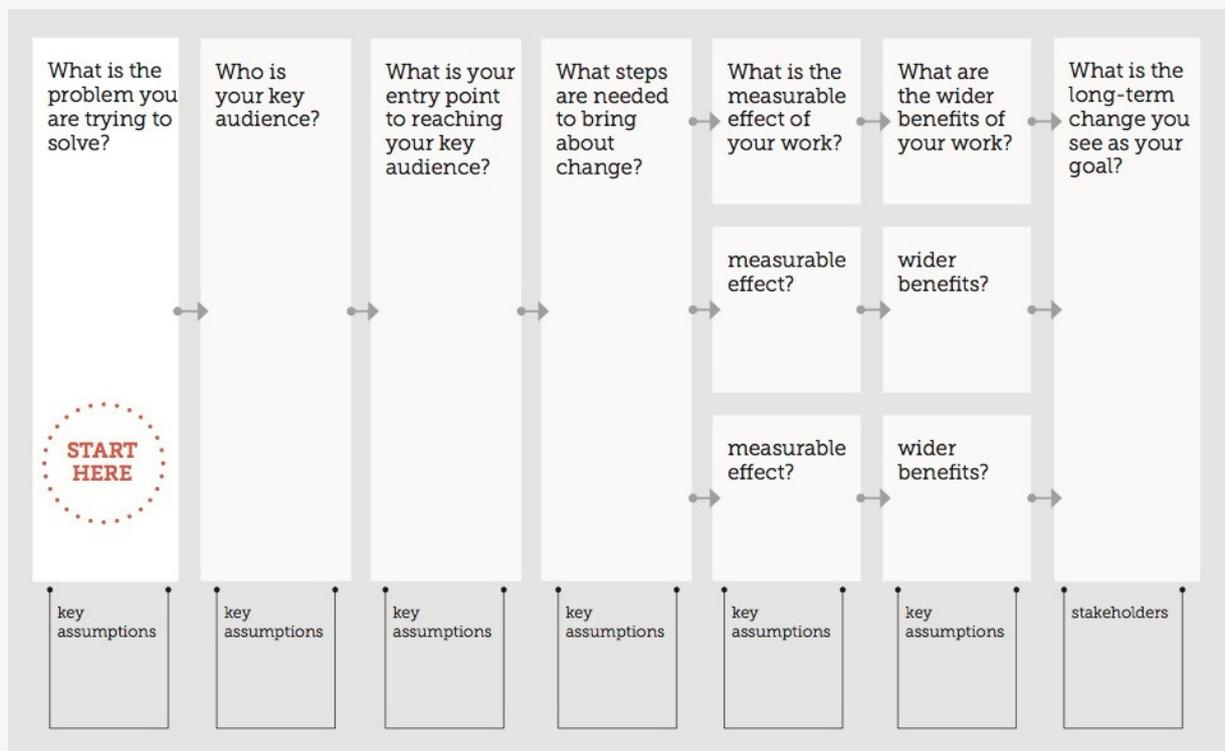
**Theory of Change**

**Action Plan**

# STEP 8- CONT

## CO-CREATION TOOLS

**ToC - Theory of Change** is a tool that will help guide your thinking on how to divide the Solution into smaller chunks, which can be managed easier. It will help you identify what smaller changes are required to reinforce additional changes until the goal is eventually achieved. Social and environmental issues are complex and to solve them, requires time and carefully thought small actions, adding upon each other, until an issue is solved completely. The Theory of Change tool enables you to plan and assess how your work will contribute to creating the intended social and environmental change.



Source: diytoolkit.org

# STEP 8- CONT

## CO-CREATION TOOLS

**Action Plan** For any activity you wish to undertake, it is important that you plan it accordingly. Identify the resources you need for both financial and human resources, the technology you will use, and identify the roles and responsibilities of each member in completing the agreed-upon tasks. Here is where you plan out your action, set goals, set a timeline, and set up a commitment from each member. Use the following template as a guideline in drafting your action plan.

The form is divided into two main sections: 'Solution' and 'Track/Review'.

**Solution:**

- Tasks:** Three columns labeled 'Now', 'Next', and 'Soon'.
  - 'Now' contains two purple rectangular boxes.
  - 'Next' contains one blue rectangular box.
  - 'Soon' contains one green rectangular box.
- Resources:** A row of five orange-bordered boxes labeled 'Money', 'Time', 'People', 'Equipment', and 'Skills'.

**Track/Review:**

- Process (your plan):** Two blue rectangular boxes.
- Output (your solution):** Two blue rectangular boxes.

Each box in the form has a small icon in the bottom right corner, likely for deleting or moving the box.

Source: ayoa.com

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# CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU GOT THROUGH THE FIRST PHASE.

Consider reflecting on what you have achieved so far.

- Have you identified the problem?
- Did you talk to the affected community members/individuals?
- Did you conduct thorough research about the identified problem?
- How many followers do you have?
- Do you have a plan and partnerships for your action?



## PHASE 2

### EXTERNAL ACTION

With your action plan under your belt, now it's time to engage with the external partners and stakeholders, as well as the individuals you plan to influence. You have a thorough understanding of the problem you want to address and have explored potential solutions. Now it's time to publicize the action, raise awareness, and cultivate strategic partnerships with followers and decision-makers.

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# PHASE 2 STEP 1

## CAMPAIGN BUILDING

One of the fastest ways to attract attention is through a campaign that should include a powerful message backed by evidence. You should write a stellar narrative, which calls for urgency to act. It is crucial that you articulate a compelling narrative that clearly states the desired change. Designing a campaign is a creative process, where thinking outside of the box and creating the space to bring creativity is necessary. Consider the following steps when designing your campaign and always test your material with others and collect their feedback:

- Who is the main target audience?
- What will be the main theme and tone of the message of your campaign?
- What is the intended outcome of your campaign?
- Identify channels to reach this audience: e.g social media, TV, radio, or street action.
- Define your PR and communication strategy.

**Checklist:** Have you attracted early adopters?

These are the people who share the same passion and urge to act on solving the problem you identified.

A good target is to have at least 5 to 10 early adopters.

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# PHASE 2 STEP 2

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Once you create your first campaign and get a follower base, it is time to foster strategic partnerships with decision-makers, funders, influencers, experts, etc. You should review your stakeholder map and update it. Who will be the best partner in helping you reach the goal of your action? Through a careful analysis of the interest and power, they bring concerning the issue, as a team, decide who will be the top three most strategic partners. One way to engage them is by inviting them to be part of a working group in which you meet periodically and create a task list.

It is important to keep transparent communication and create the space for knowledge sharing. One way to engage your partners is through direct contact. Consider using google apps as a means to share the work that you have undertaken thus far, share your action plan and invite interested partners to join you.

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# PHASE 2 STEP 3

## CATALYTIC EVENT

Now it's the time to grab attention with a bold move. This is where your actions should gather wider attention. For that to happen, it is important to organize an event that will support your campaign. Your event could either be done through peaceful protesting (example: Greta Thunberg - Friday for Future campaign, which now has become viral globally).

If you organize a protest, it is crucial that you obtain permission from the authorities and that you promote a peaceful protest through your promotional material and channels.

Additionally, you could also collaborate with artists in designing an art installation that evokes an emotional connection to the cause.

The goal in this step is to raise public awareness and create an urgency to act. Here is where you gain a wider followers base and where you leverage the resources they bring.

It is important to keep transparent communication and create the space for knowledge sharing. One way to engage your partners is through direct contact. Consider using google apps as a means to share the work that you have undertaken thus far, share your action plan and invite interested partners to join you.

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# PHASE 2 STEP 3

## CATALYTIC EVENT

**Reflection:** is your action getting enough traction? Are you expanding your followers?

Are you getting media attention? Did you make the news?

Do you have a compelling case for your solution? Is it influential enough? Is it realistic? Does it fit in with the government's actions?

If yes,

**Congratulations, you have completed Phase 2 of your activism journey.**

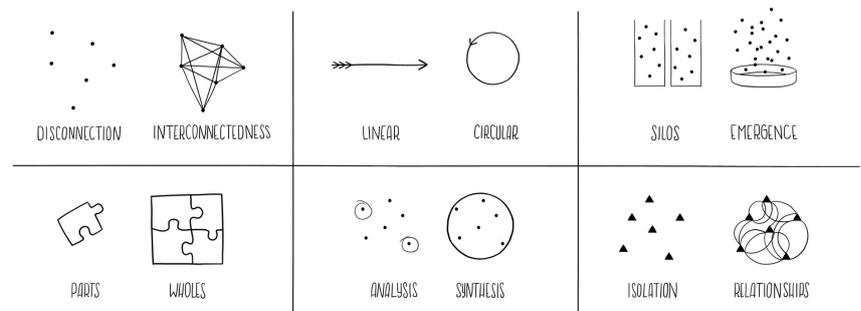
# PHASE 3

## SYSTEMS CHANGE

For any change to happen, it is important to think of how to systematically create the right conditions for the change to happen. Remember, only when we tackle the root cause of the problem, and consider the system in place, and through strategic partnerships, we can be successful in creating the desired outcome.

Systemic thinking is paramount to reach the desired change. Social and environmental issues are complex, with many factors contributing to their occurrence. As such, we need to analyze these issues not only with an analytical mind but also by seeing such issues holistically. Therefore, it is important to analyze how each contributing factor influences the problem at hand, and think of tackling the problem by proposing a solution that takes into account a holistic approach.

### TOOLS OF A SYSTEM THINKER



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# PHASE 3 STEP 1

## INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN

Government plays a crucial role in supporting the cause of an activist, and it is important to collaborate closely with the government officials to further your actions if your cause ought to be reflected in a policy change, a proposed law amendment or simply enforcing penalties. But the collaboration with government officials can take many forms. It is important that you identify both at the central level and at the local level the government ministry, municipality, or agency that is tied with your cause. Once you analyze the relevant body, it is important to identify a government champion or a team of people committed to your cause and work closely together. The support should be mutual and towards a common goal. Societal change happens when there is a collaboration between the public sector and civil society, and we each play a part as changemakers.

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# PHASE 3 STEP 2

## SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

To ensure that a change happens, it is important to have a structure of social accountability. As such, here is where the civil society organizations play a crucial role- that of oversight towards the government. Kosovo has a vibrant CSO sector that focuses on a wide range of social and environmental issues. CSOs have institutional knowledge, linkages with other players across sectors, and are mission-driven. Your job is to identify a local CSO that works toward the same social or environmental issue of your cause and seek their support. When you identify a government champion, and they are committed to your cause, the role of CSO is to hold them accountable to their commitments and analyze that they hold their end of the bargain. In this way, a mechanism is put in place so that the progress is tracked and transparency and accountability are in place.

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# PHASE 3 STEP 3

## POLICY OR LEGAL CHANGE

Policies are guiding principles that governments put in place which guide how societies function. They are formed by assumptions of how people relate to reality, about how things should be and work, and assumptions about what is beneficial for the community. They also follow logic about what has worked before and how individuals and communities organize their life around life issues. However, policies can change and ought to change when the previous assumptions do not match current reality. While it is difficult to change policies, it is worth the effort, as, in the long run, it prevents the same issue from being repeated. See this resource for further guidelines on policy changes and useful tactics to reach your policy and legal changes.

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# PHASE 3 STEP 4

## LEVELS OF IMPACT

Societal change can happen in many ways and forms. According to Ashoka, there are 4 main impacts that we as individuals can create through our work as follows:

- **Direct Service**- in which delivery of services directly to affected communities is provided, for example providing food and shelter for homeless people in a specific community.
- **Scaled Direct Service**- in which delivery of services to affected communities is scaled to reach a national or international level, for example, the work that Red Cross does in providing relief support globally.
- **Systems Change** - is when the root cause of a problem is addressed, either through policy change or a shift in how organizations, markets, governments, and societies behave. For example, the introduction of Micro Finance institutions which for the first time created the conditions for low-income people accessing financial services, a practice that was missing, and thus further reinforced poor people remaining poor.
- **Framework ( Mindset) Change** - is when the mindset of societies change which creates a paradigm shift of how an issue is addressed, seen, or accepted, For example, women's right to vote, a practice which before was seen as unacceptable, now it is widely accepted among democratic countries.

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# PHASE 3 STEP 4 CONT.

## LEVELS OF IMPACT

Change can happen from an individual, as in the case of Greta Thurnberg, Malala Yousafzai, and many other individuals who with their dedication and empathy are creating an unprecedented impact.

We hope your motivation and passion for change will not only bring the change you wish to see in the world, but it will also touch the hearts and minds of others and influence their action towards creating a Kosovo we are all proud of.

**Reflection**, please answer the following questions:

- What is the issue that your action is tackling?
- What problem is your action seeking to address specifically?
- Why does this problem exist? Think of what are the gaps in the ecosystem.
- Why is the change needed? How does your action make a better life for all?

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# PHASE 3 STEP 4 CONT.

## LEVELS OF IMPACT

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# PHASE 3 STEP 4 CONT.

## LEVELS OF IMPACT

Imagine a future without the issue!

Focus only on the Future. Imagine the scenario that your activism has achieved its goal 100%. Imagine that the people's life has improved, and nature is regenerated. What would you like to be left behind?

**TIP:** Why do this? - It is a good approach to make you think of bold long-term outcomes that your action can reach. It removes the constraints of the planning that you as an individual or team undertake. Some of the limitations that activists usually tend to experience are the lack of resources or capacities, partnerships with other actors, or the willingness of the people to join the movement. Removing the constraints from the frame of your mind also helps move away from mental modes that are formed by carrying out everyday activities and day-to-day thinking. Use your imagination and imagine the best scenario regarding the results that can be reached.

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# PHASE 3 STEP 4 CONT.

## LEVELS OF IMPACT

What would you like the world to remember your activism for? Try to capture in 15 words or less the essential change that you would like to see for a specific group or context.

Because of (your activism)...

**HINT:** Capture the essential change by writing down the people that are most affected by the issue that you've identified, or the benefit to the natural systems. It could be a small community group or a large geographic area.

How did their life improve for the better? How is nature faring better?

As you navigate the tough work of transformational social, cultural, economic, and political change, remember to take care, understand your people, acknowledge the process as a journey also filled with pressure, fear, despair and challenges. These will grow YOU and your cause.

Your love for the world will not go unnoticed so **THANK YOU!**

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# THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT.

THROUGH OUR WORK WITH FUTURE ACTIVISTS, WE WILL BE ADDING NEW TOOLS, TIPS, AND RESOURCES TO FURTHER SUPPORT THE ACTIVISTS IN THEIR JOURNEY TO CHANGE THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER.



“A CHANGE IS BROUGHT ABOUT BECAUSE ORDINARY PEOPLE DO EXTRAORDINARY THINGS.”  
— BARACK OBAMA

Reach us at [www.slkosova.org](http://www.slkosova.org) and [info@slkosova.org](mailto:info@slkosova.org)